



Podcasts: A New Age Medium For Freedom Of Expression: A Content Analysis On Spotify Tamil Top Podcasts.

¹M. Venkatesh, ²Dr.M. Sripriya,

¹Full-Time Research Scholar, ²Assistant Professor,

¹Department of Communication,

¹PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

Abstract: The rise of podcasts in recent years has revolutionized the way information and entertainment are created and shared. Offering convenience and versatility, podcasts are digital audio or video files that may be downloaded or streamed online anywhere, anytime. They possess a variety of characteristics that satisfy the needs of their listeners. Comparatively, FM radio has certain limitations such as government broadcasting policy, regional regulations, station regulations, and target market demographics. Besides the other limitations are usage of language, profanity, copyright, licensing problems, hate speech, discrimination, business classified ads, and broadcasting hours. At the same time, podcasts act as a platform for freedom of expression without any limitation permitting creators to express their thoughts, evaluations, and creativity without any impudence censorship or any kind of authorities' intervention. As an open and accessible medium, podcasts allow diverse testimonies and discussions on essential issues to reach audiences globally. They foster an inclusive space for dialogue, cultural exchange, knowledge-sharing, and societal progress.

This study was conducted in the first week of August 2023 to find out whether the podcast platform serves as a medium of entertainment for Spotify podcast listeners and to get an insight into the kind of information it disseminated to its listeners through content analysis. The top ten leading Spotify episodes were considered, and analysis was done on the content of those 10 episodes. The study found that podcasts as a medium of information and entertainment have advantage such as greater freedom of expression in content creation and sharing there is no limit to the artistic expression of a creator and there is no time limit for the podcast. At the same time as the podcaster is a gatekeeper, he or she needs to exercise responsible content creation and adhere to moral, legal, and ethical guidelines.

Index Terms - New Media, Podcasts, Spotify, content analysis, Creative Freedom, moral and ethical guidelines.

I. INTRODUCTION

Podcasts are a form of audio platform that may be downloaded or streamed online. They are just like radio programs, however have benefits over traditional FM radio. One of the primary advantages of podcasts is they are ubiquitous and offer greater convenience and flexibility for the listeners to listen. Podcasts allow millions of artists to express themselves creatively on any kind of topic. It does not have much regulation of the content except the rules put forth by Spotify. Without being much limited with the regulations and guidelines of radio stations the podcaster can choose their agenda, length, and frequency of episodes, and interact with their audience. Podcasts provide an opportunity for the listeners to know what to listen, when to listen and where to listen too. Examples of podcast platforms are Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Anchor, and Amazon Music.

Podcasts have become a famous alternative media to FM radio in recent years, mainly among the youth. According to a report with the aid of Edison Research and Triton Digital, the proportion of Americans elderly 12 and older who pay attention to podcasts month-to-month has extended from 17% in 2018 to 41% in 2023 (Geysler, 2023). Podcasts have additionally influenced culture and society in diverse ways, together with supplying education, leisure, statistics, suggestions, and social connections for people globally. Podcasts enables more variety of contents to its listeners. It is giving voice to marginalized community and their views which are neglected by mainstream media. Podcasts have additionally fostered an experience of community engagement among listeners, who can express their reviews, remarks, and memories with the podcast hosts and other lovers. Podcasts are a powerful, innovative kind of audio medium that have challenged and revolutionized FM radio. Podcasts are a form of expression as well as a source of enjoyment.

II. PODCASTS AS A MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION

Podcasts shed light on how public broadcasters are evolving, how independent podcast networks are expanding, and how people perceive the differences between radio and podcasting as audio content delivery and consumption methods. With content that is "talkier" and less carefully prepared, podcasting is fostering a new, more casual type of audio narrative feature that is built on a close interaction between the host and the listener. The podcast is altering the form of storytelling. (McHugh, 2016)

From FM Radio, podcasting is a transition. In certain instances, podcasts can be considered customized radio in terms of content creation and freedom of speech. The media format also differs from the programs that podcasters create at home. When it comes to distributing audio information, there are a lot of parallels and distinctions between radio and podcasting. ((Oprea), 2020)

In a podcast, an innovative social construction occurs up until a soft power interaction emerges between the producer and the listener. Every user and listener have an opportunity to express themselves through the podcast, a new kind of media. The podcast contains two types of freedom: existential and moral freedom. The listener may feel alienated by this independence, nevertheless, in the end. For podcast listeners who set their listeners on a reality that is outside of that reality, a false awareness occurs. (Triyono & Putri, 2020)

In the millennial era, podcasts are a type of digital new media that students can utilize as a learning tool. The use of podcast media as a learning resource is put into action in three stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Each stage is carried out methodically. It was because of several internal and external barriers. The internal barrier was the requirement for memory space on the student's phone to use the Spotify application. If learning took place at home, there would be external difficulties brought on by family distractions from the learning process. (Nur'aini, Supriatna, & Ratmaningsih, 2023)

Listening to news podcasts has a direct impact on political participation, both online and offline. The association between listening to news podcasts and both online and offline political activity was mediated via online news debate. A study (Sang. et al,2023) also discovered that consumers in places with lower freedom of speech levels tended to utilize news podcasts more frequently, and that press freedom had a direct impact on both online and offline involvement globally. The citizen communication mediation idea, which postulates that media indirectly affect attitudes and actions through other cognitive variables, finds a connection between trust in news media and consumption of news podcasts. Citizens' cognitive processes, such as comprehension and impressions of the political world, are one of the cognitive variables that mediate the relationship between news media use and political engagement. Reading the news enhances comprehension of political details, fosters elaboration, and eventually serves as a resource for political discourse. (SANG, PARK, KIM, & PARK, 2023)

III.OBJECTIVE

To find out what kind of messages, and information are disseminated by podcasters through Spotify, a leading Tamil Podcast, for the top 10 episodes.

IV.METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative research will be employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences related to using podcasts as an alternative medium to FM radio, specifically focusing on creative freedom.

- Content analysis will be used as a method to systematically analyze and interpret the content within the selected podcasts (Tamil top podcasts in the Spotify app).

This methodology aims to provide a thorough understanding of how podcasts serve as a new age medium for freedom of expression.

Table 1 – Tamil Top Podcasts

S.NO	TITLE OF PODCAST	HOST	GENRE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION
1.	Naallanaa Murukku	RJ Balaji	Comedy	Avoiding bad things in society and talking about good things around us.	25mins:24secs
2.	SVK Bodcast	Haashiraama senju and team	Comedy	Fun and open talk about the happenings in society.	1hr:48mins
3.	Kadhai Osai	Deepika Arun	Books	Narration of books	29min:35secs
4.	The Raja Praja Show	Raghavan Srinivasan	History	Stories of famous Indian kings	17mins:24secs
5.	Deep Talks Tamil	Deepan	Self-help	Tamil History and Motivation	9min:47secs
6.	Adhe Kuralgal	Deepa venkat	Thriller	Life of Detective Aishwariya	14min:57secs
7.	Kannagi Kaviyam	Marudhu Pandiyan and Anthony Raj Bernard	History	The narration of the literary masterpiece “Silapathikaram”	11mins:12secs
8.	Om Cream	Om cream	Comedy and Fun	Humorous conversation around our life	1hr:37mins
9.	Bayam oru payanam	Dr.Phobia	Thriller	Life tales of Dr.Phobia	17mins:48secs
10.	Open ah pesalama?	Vardhini Padmanabhan	Self-help	Handling problems and stories of many different peoples	9mis:34secs

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The major strengths of podcasts are freedom of expression and creative freedom. While traditional Medium FM radio has many rules and regulations for broadcasting. There is an absence of regulations to regulate podcasts. The podcasts that are selected for content analysis share a common feature creative freedom. Spotify Tamil's top podcasts in the First week of August 2023 are analysed to find out the message disseminated by podcasters through their Podcast. Spotify Tamil's top podcasts in the first week of August 2023 are content analysed by these four factors: Genre, Tone, Message, and audience engagement. The top 10 podcasts in the Spotify Tamil app are compared with standard FM radio in terms of creative freedom. Depending on the interests of the listeners, the Top charts of Podcast will change. Analysis and interpretation of podcasts is done by examining the Spotify Tamil podcasts that charted top 10 places in month of August. Some podcasts were released in August or before, but due to the demand from users, they reached the top ranks.

1.Naallanaa Murukku – RJ Balaji (Naallanaa Murukku Podcast, 2023)

In this podcast episode, RJ Balaji starts the episode with a josh tone and his signature dialogue “Vanakam uncle, aunties, dey pachasattai una dhan da”. He says this episode is the best of season 4 and starts to talk about his Instagram post. I posted a photo of me and my wife together in 2003 and added a photo of 2023. In the last 20 years, we have celebrated her birthday together and talked about that incident. In 2003 we were friends but many of them on social media shared that pic and put the caption “Not all love is fake”. Here he explains how social media manipulates things around us and concludes that we should concentrate only on good things in our lives.

2. SVK Bodcast – Haashirama Senju and team (SVK Bodcast – Haashirama Senju and team , 2023)

In this podcast, the narrators tobirama senju and mankatha mani talk about the loan tale that happened to them last year. They start to explain that this episode is all about last year’s reenactment of the banking episode which has huge support from the listeners. Tobi was cheated by the finance team and that team looted the money and recreated the incident as a podcast.

3.Kadhai Osai – Deepika arun (Kadhai Osai Podcast, 2023)

This episode is an audio book narration of writer Jeyamohan’s Vanagaan book. The Narrator Deepika Arun starts the narration with style and says about the main character Vanagaan Nadar. This book is all about the Nesamani (aka) Marshal A Neshamani, who is a famous politician in Kanyakumari. He opposed the discrimination prevailed in the court premises and did many protests for the welfare of the people. This podcast is a summarized version of Jeyamohan’s Vanagaan book.

4. The Raja Praja Show – Raghavan Srinivasan (The Raja Praja Show , 2023)

In this podcast the narrator talks and recaps the last episode, how was the Chola empire formed, who were the ancestors of Rajaraja, and what were the important achievements of his reign, We have seen all this. In this episode we are going to talk about the early Cholas ruled during the Sangam period and their strength. And also about the later, in the 9th century, how Vijayalaya Cholar revived the rule of the Cholas by giving oxygen. The Cholas suffered many defeats during the reign of Paranthakashola who came after that. Under his son Sundara Chola's rule, the Cholas managed to some extent. Finally, he concludes with how the reign has grown with the Raja Raja Chozha ruling period.

5. Deep talks Tamil – Deepan (Deep talks Tamil , 2023)

In this episode, Deepan talks about how to get positive energy and powerful affirmations to start your day. He tells the listeners how to see their inner selves. We should be thankful for life and believe we should face everything in this life. Beliefs should be positive and always be thankful to the universe for this life. We should see ourselves in the mirror and should say ‘Today is my day’. He also tells us to meditate to get positive things in our life.

6. Adhe Kuralgal – Deepa Venkat (Adhe Kuralgal, 2023)

This episode of Wild Tales starts with a mystery. The antagonist Siyan invents a virus-like something and injects it into Vijay who is a colleague of detective Aishwariya. Aishwariya rescues Vijay from Siyan and the antagonist escapes from that place. When they inject it into an individual, they will behave like a wild animal. At the end of this episode, Aishwariya gets the medicine to rescue Vijay and all others affected by the virus found by Siyan. There is a lead for the next episode and ends.

7. Kannagi Kaviyam – Marudhu Pandiyan and Anthony raj Bernard (Kannagi Kaviyam , 2023)

This episode is narrated by Marudhu Pandiyan and Anthony Raj Bernard, and it is a conclusion of Kannagi Kaviyam. This podcast is an audiobook version of Silappathikaram written by Elangovadigal. The narrator thanks the listeners for their huge support for this podcast. This episode is full of Pathini Deiva Vazhipadu and the moral said by Kannagi to the people through Ilango Adigal. Kannagi also talks about the moral of life and how to lead a beautiful life. People should not lie and shouldn't love other women, should have a faith in God, should help others and live peacefully.

8. Om Cream – Chathrian Rajan and Rahul Kanapiran (Om Cream , 2023)

The title of this podcast episode is Reality-Adhu un Prachana. Likewise, the title of the podcast the narrator Chathrian and Rahul talks about the previous episodes of Om Cream and the podcast's audio quality. The content of this podcast is about the mind, 'the mind is a game, and the output of life is all about our thinking'. They also discuss death, its dimensions, and how to understand life. Nenjam is a new concept they compared with life in this episode humorously.

9. Bayam our payanam – Dr. Phobia (Bayam our payanam, 2023)

*(2 Episodes has been listened for better understanding of Podcast content)

This podcast of Bayam oru Payanam with Dr. Phobia episode Case No.13 - Part 2 is about the case handled by Doctor Phobia, where the doctor and his assistant, Sara meets a 31-year-old woman, Hema who is affected by extreme paranoia of number 13. Dr. Phobia and his assistant are planning to treat her, so they start talking with her and came to know that she had this from her childhood itself. So, the doctor and his assistant planned to know about her past so they're through hypnotizing and doctor phobia found that hema in her past life she was born as men one who named as Maaran. he and his village people were thought they were black magic women, so they were killed 13 girls one of whom affected by some critical disease. After killing those women Maaran felt guilt. That guilt follows in his present life where he was born as Hema, after knowing about this incident Dr. Phobia went to Hema's past life through the PDA machine and made Hema kill her past life maaran before he killed the 13 girls. After she did this. Her past was erased from her mind. After that Hema knows about the doctor's past life character Ajay. this is the effect of the PDA machine and the process.

10. Open ah Pesalama? – Vardhini Padmanabhan (Open ah Pesalama?, 2023)

This Podcast episode is all about the relationship between two individuals. Is it said as love or neither emotional dependence? Vardhini Padmanabhan talks about how to handle our emotional dependency on the partner, parents, or family. She Says when we starts to love someone our own thinking will be stopped, we believe and we start to depend on them. When our partner is busy, and we do not talk with them on that day we start to feel lonely. This thing later will become toxic. So emotional dependence is needed but we have to be aware of how to carry the relationship.

VI. CONTENT ANALYSIS – TABLE I:

6.1 Genre:

The genre of the above five podcasts is clearly defined as it primarily focuses on comedy, society, books, history, and self-help.

6.2 Tone:

The tone of the podcast is predominantly informative and authoritative. Every podcaster lends credibility to the content. They maintain a conversational yet josh tone according to their content and genre throughout all episodes of the podcast, making complex topics accessible to the audience.

6.3 Message:

The central message of the podcast revolves around the content and genre of the podcast. Every podcaster conveys the messages uniquely according to the content of podcasts.

6.4 Audience Engagement:

The podcast maintains audience engagement through various strategies:

- a. Creativity
- b. Entertainment
- c. Humor
- d. Informative
- e. Interactivity

Overall, the above five podcasts successfully combine their genre, tone, message, and engagement strategies to create an interesting and entertaining experience for their listeners. It effectively gives the podcast listeners a new experience.

VII. LIMITATIONS

- This study focused on the top 10 Tamil podcasts on Spotify, which might not be representative of Tamil Nadu's entire podcast scene. An extensive and more diverse sampling of podcasts should provide a more complete picture of the podcasting scene.
- The listeners' opinions and feedback, which may be important elements influencing the podcasters' creative freedom and content production, were not examined in the study. It might be helpful to conduct a poll or interview with podcast listeners to learn more about how they consume podcasts and what expectations they have of podcasters.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Podcasts are an opportunity media format that gives podcasters more creative flexibility than conventional FM radio. This study examined how podcasters use this flexibility to create interesting and varied material by doing a qualitative content analysis of the top chart 10 Tamil-language podcasts on Spotify. The research suggests that podcasters use a variety of strategies to draw and keep listeners, including picking topics that appeal to their target audience, employing comedy and storytelling, developing interactive portions, and collaborating with other podcasters. The examination also uncovers some of the difficulties and restrictions that podcasters deal with, including resource loss, censorship, and dissent. By providing insights into the creation and consumption of podcasts in a non-Western culture, the study adds to the body of work on opportunity media and podcasts. The study has implications for podcasters, listeners, and lawmakers who are concerned with promoting podcasts as a form of information and expression. The podcast doesn't have any duration restrictions like the FM radio, and they increase and decrease the duration of the podcast according to the content of the podcast, But FM radio has some time restrictions like show broadcasting hours and advertisement timing and many more. Likewise, a Podcast doesn't have any restrictions in content creation, and it has more creative freedom when it is compared with Traditional FM radio.

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